

REMARKS

Claims 17, 21 – 29 and 31 – 36 are presently pending. In the above-identified Office Action, the Examiner finally rejected Claims 17, 21 – 29 and 31 – 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hadden *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,424,817), hereinafter ‘Hadden’ in view of Marko *et al.* (U. S. Patent No. 6,154,452), hereinafter ‘Marko’.

On December 20, 2005, Applicants’ Attorney (William J. Benman) had a telephone interview with Examiner John Lee in connection with the above-identified Patent Application.

During the interview, Applicants’ Attorney inquired as to whether the Examiner felt that there was any potentially patentable subject matter disclosed in the Application. The stated purpose for the inquiry was to ascertain whether Applicants’ Attorney should advise the Applicants to continue the prosecution of the Application via a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) or file a Notice of Appeal.


In this connection, the Examiner indicated that a Claim narrowly drawn to the embodiment shown in Figure 2 might be found to be patentable if presented via an RCE.

By this Amendment, the Claims have been amended as per the suggestion of the Examiner during the Interview on December 20, 2005.

Hence, reconsideration, allowance and passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, reconsideration, allowance and passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
P. Marko *et al.*

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